

Mildred Larsen visited Dr. R. Raymond Green's office on February 8, 1982 and related the following story about activities at her father's (Nels J. Johnson) Mill on Provo River beyond the river bridge going into Midway from Heber City.

Mildred's father had become acquainted with several Drs. in Salt Lake City because of a problem he and his wife Mary Ann Orgill Johnson had with their son, Ronald Mark Johnson. These good people had taken their son Ronald to a very fine Orthopedic Surgeon named Dr. Samuel Clinton Baldwin. Dr. Baldwin treated Ronald who was then 4 or 5 years for his club feet.

As people from all over the County came to the mill as customers for flour, grain to be ground etc. Nels learned that there were others that needed Dr. Baldwin's help. So a visit was arranged and the Dr. examined these patients at the Johnson home if other help was needed Dr. Baldwin could refer them to different Doctors. There was no weekly or monthly visits, once scheduled at anytime folks told of their need and Nels tried to help them: since he had one of the earliest cars in the valley, he many times provided transportation. Some of these visits ended in a fishing trip to Strawberry River County, where the trout lay on the ripples at spawning time and could be picked up with the bare hands. Thomas J. Orgill would take a wagon load of supplies and make camp at a likely place. Eph Nelson went along to catch enough fish for supper. The Dr.'s followed later in a white top, even Gov. Bamberger went along on one trip. Dr. Baldwin said at one time "if he had to be out in the wilds and could only be accompanied by one other man that man would be Tom Orgill" also he startled his companions by getting up early and Dr. Baldwin^{was} bathing in the icy waters of Strawberry River.

Dr. Bert Dannenberg married a girl from Heber City, Lacy Turner, and had his practice in the valley. Later Dr. T.A. Dannenberg, a brother came from Kamas and a hospital was started.

A few people who were helped with these doctors were:

1. Lucille Watkins with blood poisoning in her arm.
2. Dora Hair who had been bed fast for years.
3. Delwin Pyper (Ray's son) with club feet.
4. June Bonner who could not walk.

They were taken to Salt Lake City for hospital care.

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THE PEOPLES' ROLLER MILL

When Midway was first settled there wasn't a method at all of grinding wheat into flour; and then a stone mill was built and the stone-ground flour, of course was whole wheat flour, or graham flour, as it was called. That millstone is atop the monument on the town square in front of the post office. The flour mill was built some forty years later in Midway, which was the Midway Mill, or the Peoples' Roller Mill, as it was named. This mill was a roller mill, which meant that steel rollers ground the wheat, and plant sifters separated the bran and shorts and germade from the flour, so that they had white flour. This was one of the first roller mills in Utah. Nels Johnson bought this mill in 1900. He ran the mill for 60 years, and his family lived and grew up in the house near the mill. During World War I he shipped flour to Belgium under the Hoover Food Plan. He ground Relief Society wheat that the L.D.S Relief Society had garnered from gleaning and saved over the years.

The flour mill was a 50 barrel capacity. That meant that every 24 hours 50 barrels - 196 pounds to a barrel - were produced. It furnished a sale for wheat grown locally by farmers in the county. However, farmers from other counties came with their wheat to be ground in those early days. Indians from the Uintah Reservation would come in large caravans. They would camp at the mill and stay all night, or perhaps two or three days while their wheat was ground, so they could take it back to their families. Mrs. Johnson used to have Indians come begging for food and other things while they camped at the mill, and she was always willing to share with and help them.

In early Utah almost all communities had flour mills, and they were small mills comparable to the one we have in Midway (or that we had in Midway) but most of them now are out of operation. People no longer grow wheat nor do they bake bread, as a general rule, and so the flour mill business just faded away.

You don't think of flour as a luxury in our economy, but one of the early settlers in Midway carried a bushel of wheat to Provo in the early days to have it ground into white flour for his family's Thanksgiving dinner - carrying the wheat to Provo and the flour home again on his back.

*Nels Joseph
Johnson
↓ Home*

→ Mill



Mill pond

The Peoples' Roller Mill